
Introduced by Senator Liu
(Principal coauthor: Senator Hancock)
(Principal coauthor: Assembly Member Buchanan)

August 13, 2013

Senate Concurrent Resolution No. 67—Relative to Attendance Awareness Month.

LEGISLATIVE COUNSEL'S DIGEST

SCR 67, as introduced, Liu. Attendance Awareness Month.

This measure would designate September 2013 as Attendance Awareness Month, and would encourage public officials, educators, and communities in California to observe the month with appropriate activities and programs.

Fiscal committee: no.

1 WHEREAS, Good attendance is essential to pupil achievement
2 and graduation, and systemic approaches are needed to reduce
3 chronic absenteeism rates in California, with a focus starting as
4 early as kindergarten; and
5 WHEREAS, Chronic absence, missing 10 percent or more of
6 school, which can be just two or three days a month, for any reason,
7 including both excused and unexcused absences, is a proven
8 predictor of academic trouble; and
9 WHEREAS, A pupil's chronic absence is a predictor of
10 below-grade-level reading proficiency by the third grade and course
11 failure and eventual dropout later in that pupil's career, and chronic
12 absence thereby weakens our communities and our local
13 economies; and

1 WHEREAS, The impact of chronic absence hits low-income
2 pupils and children of color particularly hard if they do not have
3 the resources to make up for lost time in the classroom.
4 Low-income pupils and children of color are more likely to face
5 systemic barriers to getting to school, such as unreliable
6 transportation, lack of access to health care, unstable or
7 unaffordable housing, and even unfair disciplinary policies; and

8 WHEREAS, Chronic absence exacerbates the achievement gap
9 that separates low-income pupils from their peers, since pupils
10 from low-income families are both more likely to be chronically
11 absent and more likely to be affected academically by missing
12 school. Absenteeism also undermines efforts to improve struggling
13 schools, since it is hard to measure improvement in classroom
14 instruction if pupils are not in class to benefit from the
15 improvement efforts; and

16 WHEREAS, Improving attendance and reducing chronic absence
17 take commitment, collaboration, and tailored approaches to address
18 particular challenges and strengths in each community; and

19 WHEREAS, Superintendent of Public Instruction Tom
20 Torlakson, Attorney General Kamala D. Harris, and Secretary of
21 California Health and Human Services Diana Dooley jointly hosted
22 an interagency forum on chronic absence to encourage state and
23 local collaboration to improve the overall health, safety, and
24 well-being of our children by promoting public awareness and
25 reforms that improve school attendance; and

26 WHEREAS, The Legislature enacted Senate Bill 1357 of the
27 2009–10 Regular Session to establish a definition and reporting
28 mechanisms for chronic absence and Assembly Bill 97 of the
29 2013–14 Regular Session to establish chronic absence as a state
30 priority for our schools to be included in the recently enacted local
31 control accountability plans; and

32 WHEREAS, Schools and districts must do more to track,
33 calculate, and share the data on how many and which pupils are
34 chronically absent so that schools and communities can work to
35 deliver the right interventions to the right pupils; and

36 WHEREAS, All pupils, even those who show up regularly, are
37 affected by chronic absence because teachers must spend time
38 reviewing for pupils who missed lessons; and

39 WHEREAS, Attendance can be improved, and chronic absence
40 significantly reduced, when schools, parents, and communities

1 work together to monitor and promote good attendance and address
2 hurdles that keep children from getting to school; now, therefore,
3 be it

4 *Resolved by the Senate of the State of California, the Assembly*
5 *thereof concurring*, That the Legislature designate September 2013
6 as Attendance Awareness Month in the State of California, and
7 encourages public officials, educators, and communities in
8 California to observe the month with appropriate activities and
9 programs; and be it further

10 *Resolved*, That the Legislature join communities across our
11 nation to increase awareness of the importance of school attendance
12 by addressing attendance barriers and the root causes of chronic
13 absence; and be it further

14 *Resolved*, That the Secretary of the Senate transmit copies of
15 this resolution to the authors for appropriate distribution.